

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
February 14, 2020

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

February 15: NAACP Fund Gala, Richmond Convention, 6:00 - 9:00 PM
February 17-21: Presidents' Week Recess, Schools and Offices Closed
February 24: Classes Reconvene
February 25: AASAT, DeJean, 6:00 PM
February 26: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean, 6:30 PM
February 27: Black History Month Celebrate, Crespi MS, 5:30 PM
March 3: California Primary Election Day
March 3: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 4:30 PM
March 5: All District Music Festival, Richmond Auditorium, 5:00 PM
March 6: You Make A Difference Awards, DeJean, 7:00 PM
March 19: Early Learning Family STEM Night, Peres
March 26: Early Learning Family STEM Night, West County Mandarin

Friday Memo - Holiday Break

Due to the Presidents' week recess, the next Friday Memo will be published on Friday, February 28, 2020

Management Change in Human Resources - Marci Williams William Brown, Director Classified Personnel in Human Resources, recently accepted a job in the Riverbank School District. His last day in our District was Friday, January 18, 2020. He joined the West Contra Costa Unified School District on July 1, 2017. This position will stay vacant while we work through our budget plans to reduce the deficit and likely will be part of our unrepresentative management deduction as we redesign our operations departments.

Science Instruction in WCCUSD - Gracie Guerrero

Elementary

Instructional resources are available for Elementary teachers to provide Science instruction that addresses the [Three Dimensions of the Next Generation Science Standards](#). K-5th grade teachers currently have access to NGSS-aligned lessons and videos through the online [Mystery Science](#) program in English and Spanish. Digital subscriptions are centrally-funded and training is provided by the district STEM department. FOSS Kits are in rotation and support inquiry and phenomena based instruction aligned to the NGSS.



Site based Wednesday PD sessions are available for training teachers on phenomena based instruction. Ed Services will be providing a recommendation for required instructional minutes for NGSS Science instruction in all TK-6th grade classrooms beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. Sample schedules will be provided to site leaders beginning in March 2020.

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Middle School

WCCUSD Science teachers have adopted the [Preferred Integrated Model](#) for grade 6-8 NGSS Instruction. The Grade 6-8 Science instructional materials committee began evaluating and piloting NGSS-aligned instructional materials in February 2019. The [Middle School Science Adoption Timeline](#) is attached here for reference. Pilots extended through January 2020 to more fully evaluate materials, based on committee members' requests. The committee has concluded its review and analysis of materials and field testing. A recommendation for adoption of Science instructional materials for grades 6-8 will be brought to the Board on March 11, 2020. The recommended materials adoption is for a six year adoption cycle. Estimated costs for materials for a six year adoption cycle are \$1,324,000. Funding for materials has been allocated in Restricted Lottery - Approved Textbooks and Core Curriculum. Core Professional Development is included with the purchase. The cost for teachers attending the training is pending potential MOUs with UTR.

High School

The High School Department chairs, in collaboration with Educational Services Instructional staff, are recommending the [3-course model](#) from the [California Science Framework](#) for High School Science instruction. The 3-course model integrates Earth & Space Science into each course in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. All WCCUSD Chemistry and Physics teachers currently have access to supplemental instructional materials from STEMscopes, funded centrally to support NGSS alignment. Securing funding for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics instructional materials is our priority for 2020-2021.

Partnerships

Chevron has funded several STEM nights for TK-2nd grade students and families. STEM Nights have been a huge success at Mira Vista, Valley View, Olinda, and Wilson. The next STEM night is February 27th at Coronado.

STEM Fair

The [WCCUSD STEM Fair](#) was held the week of February 10 at Pinole Valley High School. Students in grades 6-12 from 11 sites across the district made presentations in person to judges on Tuesday February 11. Judges are professionals with science backgrounds from UC Berkeley, Chevron, USDA, Bio-Rad, Bayer and other local affiliations. The Awards Ceremony and Project Viewing was held Thursday, February 13 at 7pm in the PVHS Theater. Top projects will move on to the Golden Gate STEM Fair in March with a chance to advance to the state level in April. We are so proud of our students for participating and thankful to all District staff who coordinated the STEM Fair.

Bond Program Site Budget Decreases to Return \$3.9M to the Bond Fund – Luis Freese

At the Board meeting on February 26, 2020, Staff will present an updated Bond Program Site Budget Authorization for the reconciliation and closeout of Olinda Elementary School and Nystrom

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Office of the Superintendent

Elementary School Projects. The Site Budget Authorization outlines returning project savings totaling \$3,892,783.86 to the fund balance for the Bond Program. The budget decreases will increase the available bond dollars to fund future projects. The positive impact of this adjustment was highlighted at the Facilities Committee Meeting, on February 5, 2020, and at the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee meeting on February 10, 2020.

The financial impact of Project savings are:

Bond Program	Current	Estimated
Projected Cash Balance at June 2021	99,072,948	102,965,731
Total Bond Program Budget	1,656,822,430	1,652,929,646

Media Stories of Interest - Marcus Walton

The following news stories may be of interest. Copies of these stories are included in this communication.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2020-02-09/nearly-every-san-diego-county-school-district-is-spending-more-than-they-have-or-they-will-be> -

Nearly every San Diego County school district may be spending more than it can afford

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/education/article/Largest-school-bond-in-California-history-would-15045797.php> - Largest school bond in California history would throw \$15 billion at fixing schools

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/02/12/school-district-votes-to-rename-richmond-school-after-michelle-obama/> - School District Votes To Rename Richmond School After Michelle Obama

<https://abc11.com/education/michelle-obama-has-school-named-after-her-in-bay-area/5927560/> - Michelle Obama Elementary to be new name of school in California

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/east-bay-school-district-oks-8m-in-cuts-possible-teacher-layoffs-loom/2233354/> - East Bay School District OKs \$8M in Cuts; Possible Teacher Layoffs Loom

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/bayarea/article/School-Board-Approves-Renaming-Elementary-School-15053380.php> - School Board Approves Renaming Elementary School After Michelle Obama

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/richmond-school-named-after-michelle-obama/2233283/> - Richmond School Named After Michelle Obama (video only)

<https://www.wptv.com/news/national/california-elementary-school-to-be-renamed-after-michelle-obama> - California elementary school to be renamed after Michelle Obama

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<https://sfist.com/2020/02/12/californias-largest-ever-15-billion-school-bond-ballot-measure-explained/> - California's Largest-Ever \$15 Billion School Bond Ballot Measure, Explained

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2020/02/10/naming-east-bay-school-after-former-first-lady-michelle-obama-nearly-a-reality/> - Richmond school may be renamed after Michelle Obama

<https://www.kron4.com/news/bay-area/bay-area-elementary-school-may-soon-be-named-after-michelle-obama/> - Bay Area elementary school may soon be named after Michelle Obama

<https://www.kron4.com/news/250-teachers-may-be-laid-off-as-west-contra-costa-school-district-faces-budget-cuts/> - East Bay school district considers teacher layoffs amid looming budget cuts

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Michelle-Obama-Elementary-El-Cerrito-school-15050756.php> - Michelle Obama Elementary? East Bay school could honor former first lady

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/teachers-workers-with-east-bay-school-district-facing-layoffs/2229642/> - Teachers, Workers With East Bay School District Facing Layoffs



**WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
FACILITIES PLANNING CONSTRUCTION
Bond Program Site Budget Authorization**

Based on forensic Audit recommendation; TC 6-7

Site Name	Total Approved Budget	Proposed adjustment Presented	Total Approved Budget	Actual Expended*	Committed Balance	Proposed Budget Balance	Comment for adjustment
	11/06/19	02/26/20		as of 01/31/20	as of 01/31/20		
BAYVIEW	19,850,802		19,850,802	19,850,802	-	0	Footnote 1
CHAVEZ	1,058,234		1,058,234	1,058,234	-	-	Footnote 1
COLLINS	1,638,871		1,638,871	1,638,871	-	-	Footnote 4
CORONADO	43,022,627		43,022,627	43,022,627	-	-	Footnote 1
DOVER	35,095,267		35,095,267	35,095,267	-	-	Footnote 1
DOWNER	33,415,902		33,415,902	33,415,902	-	-	Footnote 1
ELLERHORST	13,931,806		13,931,806	13,931,806	-	-	Footnote 1
FAIRMONT	6,864,259		6,864,259	4,673,984	56,062	2,134,213	Footnote 3
FORD	30,817,526		30,817,526	30,817,526	-	-	Footnote 1
GRANT	2,155,565		2,155,565	2,155,565	-	-	Footnote 1
HANNA RANCH	783,349		783,349	783,349	-	-	Footnote 1
HARDING	22,632,446		22,632,446	22,632,446	-	-	Footnote 1
HARMON KNOLLS	448,435		448,435	448,435	-	-	Footnote 1
HIGHLAND	2,679,839		2,679,839	1,932,714	-	747,125	Footnote 3
KENSINGTON	19,343,892		19,343,892	19,343,892	-	-	Footnote 1
KING	25,342,166		25,342,166	25,342,166	-	-	Footnote 1
LAKE	2,647,823		2,647,823	1,647,823	8,400	991,600	Footnote 3
LINCOLN	17,676,561		17,676,561	17,676,561	-	-	Footnote 1
LUPINE HILLS	15,395,678		15,395,678	15,395,678	-	-	Footnote 1
MADERA	12,233,801		12,233,801	12,233,801	-	-	Footnote 1
MIRA VISTA	16,651,130		16,651,130	16,651,130	-	-	Footnote 1
MONTALVIN	16,791,028		16,791,028	16,791,028	-	-	Footnote 1
MURPHY	15,619,655		15,619,655	15,619,655	-	-	Footnote 1
NYSTROM	51,486,844	(3,686,031)	47,800,813	47,800,813	-	(0)	Footnote 1
OHLONE	34,492,752		34,492,752	34,492,752	-	-	Footnote 1
OLINDA	2,286,942	(206,753)	2,080,188	2,079,675	-	514	Footnote 1
PERES	21,424,293		21,424,293	21,424,293	-	-	Footnote 1
RIVERSIDE	21,511,005		21,511,005	14,738,905	171,640	6,600,460	Footnote 3
SHANNON	1,555,163		1,555,163	1,555,163	-	-	Footnote 4
SHELDON	15,102,837		15,102,837	15,102,837	-	-	Footnote 1
STEGE	6,345,886		6,345,886	3,481,786	-	2,864,100	Footnote 3
STEWART	16,737,037		16,737,037	16,737,037	-	-	Footnote 1
TARA HILLS	14,975,067		14,975,067	14,975,067	-	-	Footnote 1
VALLEY VIEW	10,222,362		10,222,362	10,222,362	-	-	Footnote 1
VERDE	16,065,870		16,065,870	16,065,870	-	-	Footnote 1
WASHINGTON	15,322,847		15,322,847	15,322,847	-	-	Footnote 1
WILSON	44,129,324		44,129,324	21,190,160	22,033,915	905,249	Footnote 3
Elementary Totals	627,754,889	(3,892,784)	623,862,105	587,348,828	22,270,017	14,243,260	
CRESPI MIDDLE	6,545,896		6,545,896	5,626,319	509,402	410,175	Footnote 3
DEJEAN MIDDLE	381,209		381,209	381,209	-	-	Footnote 1
HELMS MIDDLE	83,432,888		83,432,888	83,432,888	-	(0)	Footnote 1
HERCULES MIDDLE	699,000	-	699,000	699,000	-	-	Footnote 1
KOREMATSU MIDDLE	73,382,179		73,382,179	72,655,201	-	726,978	Footnote 2
PINOLE MIDDLE	56,689,430		56,689,430	56,689,430	-	-	Footnote 1
Middle Schools Total	221,130,602	-	221,130,602	219,484,047	509,402	1,137,153	



**WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
FACILITIES PLANNING CONSTRUCTION
Bond Program Site Budget Authorization**

Based on forensic Audit recommendation; TC 6-7

Site Name	Total Approved Budget	Proposed adjustment Presented	Total Approved Budget	Actual Expended*	Committed Balance	Proposed Budget Balance	Comment for adjustment
	11/06/19	02/26/20		as of 01/31/20	as of 01/31/20		
DE ANZA HIGH	132,236,248		132,236,248	132,236,248	-	-	Footnote 1
EL CERRITO HIGH	146,850,105		146,850,105	146,850,105	-	(0)	Footnote 1
GREENWOOD ACADEMY/LPS	79,583,607		79,583,607	79,583,607	-	0	Footnote 1
HERCULES HIGH	3,295,019		3,295,019	3,295,019	-	-	Footnote 4
KENNEDY HIGH	33,854,981		33,854,981	33,854,981	-	-	Footnote 4
PINOLE VALLEY HIGH	216,549,580		216,549,580	192,886,534	2,150,177	21,512,869	Footnote 2
RICHMOND HIGH	42,622,087		42,622,087	23,380,158	16,942,813	2,299,116	Footnote 3
VISTA HIGH	7,236,543		7,236,543	7,236,543	-	0	Footnote 1
High Schools Total	662,228,170	-	662,228,170	619,323,196	19,092,990	23,811,985	
ADAMS MIDDLE	691,211		691,211	691,211	-	-	Footnote 1
CAMERON	122,195		122,195	122,195	-	-	Footnote 4
CASTRO	620,944		620,944	620,944	-	-	Footnote 1
DELTA NSS DEANZA	152,226		152,226	152,226	-	-	Footnote 1
EL SOBRANTE	536,231		536,231	536,231	-	-	Footnote 1
HARBOUR WAY COM DAY	121,944		121,944	121,944	-	-	Footnote 1
KAPPA NSS KENNEDY	109,831		109,831	109,831	-	-	Footnote 1
NORTH CAMPUS	205,450		205,450	205,450	-	-	Footnote 1
OMEGA NSS RICHMOND	118,313		118,313	118,313	-	-	Footnote 1
SEAVIEW	499,116		499,116	499,116	-	-	Footnote 1
SIGMA NSS PVHS	110,949		110,949	110,949	-	-	Footnote 1
TRANS LEARNING CENTER	116,673		116,673	116,673	-	-	Footnote 1
WEST HERCULES ELEM	56,847		56,847	56,847	-	-	Footnote 1
Closed Schools/Programs Total	3,461,930	-	3,461,930	3,461,930	-	-	
CENTRAL	102,831,634		102,831,634	96,224,471	2,518,601	4,088,562	Budget thru 20-21
RCP CHARTER	4,415,204		4,415,204	4,415,204	-	-	Footnote 1
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	35,000,000		35,000,000	34,319,212	-	680,788	Footnote 2
Admin/Other Total	142,246,838	-	142,246,838	134,958,887	2,518,601	4,769,351	
GRAND TOTAL	1,656,822,430	(3,892,784)	1,652,929,646	1,564,576,887	44,391,010	43,961,749	

Footnote 1: Site projects are completed.

Footnote 2: Site Legacy projects are under planning, construction or in closeout.

Footnote 3: Site Legacy projects are completed and 2016 Facilities Master Plan Projects are under planning, construction or in closeout.

Footnote 4: Site projects are part of the 2016 Facilities Master Plan Projects to commence in future.

Note: Does not include 1998 Measure E projects (DeJean Middle School)



Dehesa School District, with its single elementary school, is one of three districts in San Diego County to file a “qualified” budget certification, meaning it may not meet financial obligations for this year or the next two fiscal years. (Nelvin C. Cepeda / The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Officials say the sooner districts can make budget cuts, the better

By KRISTEN TAKETA

FEB. 9, 2020
5 AM



All but one of the 42 school districts in San Diego County are expecting to spend more than they take in, either this year or in the next two school years.

Most are projecting to do so for all three years.

That’s according to recent letters from the San Diego County Office of Education



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School districts have deficits when their spending exceeds their revenue. A deficit in one year isn't necessarily bad for a district, but deficits over time create structural budget imbalances that become more difficult to cure as time progresses, experts say. Structural deficits also make districts more vulnerable to unforeseen circumstances, the county office says.

In its letters, the county office advised several districts that they should be making budget cuts soon to reduce these deficits.

“There are a lot of pressures on district budgets right now, and we're going to see more districts needing to make reductions,” said Mike Simonson, deputy superintendent at the San Diego County Office of Education.

Experts say that struggling school districts will be better off financially if they are willing and able to make cuts relatively quickly, to align spending with revenue, rather than relying on one-time funds, such as reserves, to make ends meet.

“One-time money just pushes the problem down the road, and we encourage all districts to act early,” Simonson said.

Experts also say that districts shouldn't be using their reserves — which are usually needed in a recession — in this time of relative economic prosperity.

Three San Diego County districts have filed what are called “qualified” certifications in their first interim reports; that means the districts may not meet their financial obligations this year or in the next two years. Those three districts are Dehesa Elementary, San Ysidro Elementary and Vista Unified.

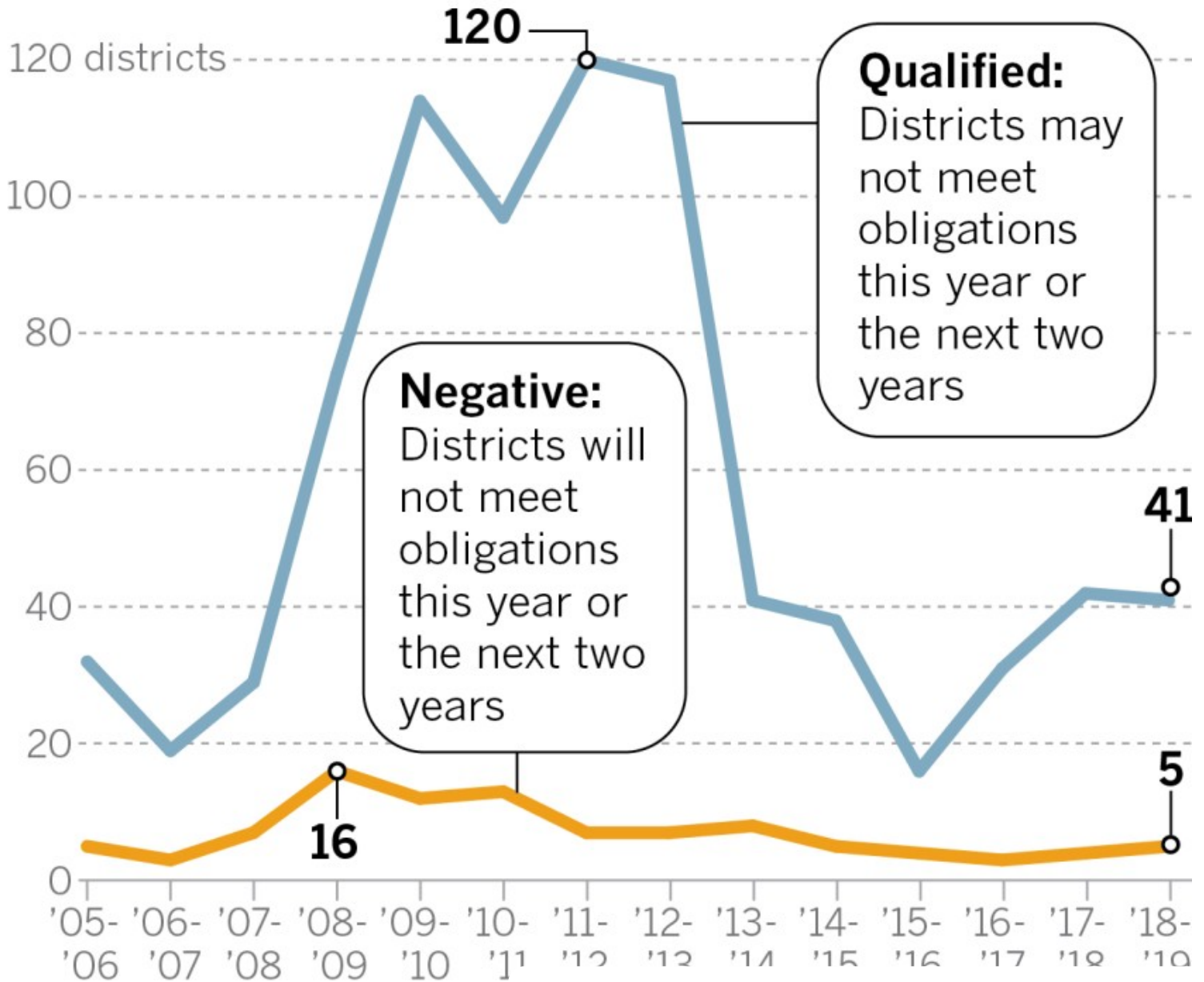
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California districts with financial troubles

Each winter, school districts statewide report their current financial status and any expected deficit spending. Districts filing “qualified” or “negative” certifications rose during the recession, then dipped, but have been rising again in recent years.



Source: California Department of Education

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next school year and \$41 million the following year to make ends meet, according to the county office's analysis.

Next year's needed cuts represent about 8 percent of San Diego Unified's spending, "which is a substantial amount to reduce in one year," the county office wrote.

The numbers in the first interim reports are projections and likely will change between now and when the state budget is finalized in the summer. Districts had to submit their first interim reports in December, before they knew how much money the governor plans to give them next school year.

School districts often say that they're facing budget troubles because their enrollment — and thus the number of students for whom they can collect per-pupil state funding — is falling while mandatory costs, like special education and pensions, are increasing.

"The problem is that the increases in things like pensions and health insurance and some of these other costs go up more rapidly than the rate of increase of the funds that we're getting from the state," said San Diego Unified School Board President John Lee Evans.

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Simonson said the most common reason he saw for districts' financial struggles is declining enrollment.

School districts may still report financial difficulties even if they're getting more state funding than last year. That's partly because California school districts' costs, including scheduled teacher salary raises, on average rise about 4 percent each year, Simonson said.

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“Anytime we have a (cost-of-living adjustment) less than 4 percent, we’re losing ground,” Simonson said.

Some critics condemn San Diego Unified and other districts that raise salaries in times of deficit spending and budget cuts. San Diego Unified recently approved a 3.7 percent increase for staff that was projected to cost \$45.1 million next school year.

Evans said the district could balance its budget by forgoing raises, but “we would be putting San Diego Unified in a disadvantageous position” for attracting teachers to the district. Evans also said the district’s pay increases weren’t far off from the state’s cost-of-living increase in school funding, which was 3.3 percent.

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Projected deficits by school district

Most school districts in San Diego County are projecting deficits for this year, meaning they expect to spend more than what they receive in revenue. Just because a district shows a surplus this year doesn't mean they haven't been deficit spending or aren't expecting future deficits. Districts with a "qualified" certification may not meet their financial obligations this year or in the next two years. Districts with a "negative" certification will not meet their obligations this year or in the next two years.

District	▼ 2018-2019 enrollment	Certification	2019-2020 projected deficit	2020-2021 projected or needed budget cuts
San Diego Unified	103,194	Positive	\$-36,600,000	\$71,600,000
Sweetwater Union High	39,165	Negative	\$-400,000	\$26,400,000
Poway Unified	36,450	Positive	\$-13,700...	\$3,000,000
Chula Vista Elementary	23,080	Positive	\$-6,400,000	\$7,500,000
San Marcos Unified	21,007	Positive	\$-6,800,000	\$7,200,000
Vista Unified	20,756	Qualified	\$-2,100,000	\$14,400,000
Oceanside Unified	17,648	Positive	\$-4,300,000	\$2,100,000
Grossmont Union High	16,760	Positive	\$300,000	N/A
Cajon Valley Union	16,666	Positive	\$-10,300,...	N/A
Escondido Union	15,377	Positive	\$-6,800,000	N/A
San Dieguito Union High	13,128	Positive	\$-4,100,000	N/A
La Mesa-Spring Valley	12,111	Positive	\$-600,000	\$1,700,000
Carlsbad Unified	11,428	Positive	\$-2,200,000	N/A
Escondido Union High	7,364	Positive	\$-3,300,000	N/A

Projecting cuts

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\$3 million for next school year out of a \$60 million budget, which is more than what it projected in its first interim report.

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San Ysidro has been deficit spending for the past three years, which has resulted in district reserve levels below the minimum required by the state, Simonson wrote. San Ysidro's enrollment also has declined for the last three years.

“Declining enrollment, rising pension and special education costs and prior construction projects have impacted our budget,” the district said in an email statement. “The District is in the process of taking the necessary steps to stabilize the budget. We project a positive budget by the end of the school year.”

Dehesa, a district that enrolled 138 students last school year, filed a qualified status after a sharp drop in charter school fee revenue and superintendent turnover last year.

Dehesa is planning to use its reserves to help address its budget deficits, including \$1.3 million from its special reserve fund, \$250,000 from its reserve fund for capital projects and \$400,000 from its reserve fund for post-employment benefits, Simonson wrote.

Simonson told Dehesa that the inter-fund transfers “will only be a temporary solution” and that “the district needs to make ongoing expenditure reductions to eliminate deficit spending and remain fiscally solvent.”

The district has said it will make \$701,000 in budget cuts next school year and another \$699,000 in cuts the following year, Simonson said.

Vista Unified also filed as a qualified

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Vista Unified is projecting to cut \$5.4 million this year, \$14.4 million next school year and \$3.5 million the following year, Simonson noted.

Sweetwater, the only district in the county with a negative certification, is projecting to end the current school year \$5.4 million in the red and to make budget cuts of \$26 million and \$7.8 million in the next two school years, according to Simonson's letter.

Simonson again told Sweetwater it needs to produce a comprehensive fiscal recovery plan that includes details such as when budget cuts will occur and the dollar amounts of the cuts.

The district is working with the school board and forming an advisory committee to write the plan, according to Simonson.

Several school districts filed with the county a "positive" budget certification but are expecting years of future deficit spending or that they may have to make budget cuts.

In those cases, districts were approved as "positive" because they were able to show that they have a good plan to make budget reductions, Simonson said. Usually it's a plan that isn't contingent on getting someone else's approval, such as unions.

South Bay Union continues to have a structural deficit despite approving budget cuts, wrote Brent Watson, the county office's executive director for district financial services.

South Bay Union's deficit spending for this year and the next total 15 percent of its budget, Watson said. It would have to cut 12 percent of its general spending over the next two years to cure its structural deficit, which Watson said is substantial.

San Marcos Unified also has a structu

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The county office noted in its letters that the fund balances for Lemon Grove, Lakeside Union, National and Poway Unified are projected to deplete by 88 percent, 73 percent, 68 percent and 59 percent, respectively, over the course of the next two years, due to deficit spending.

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4 weeks for only \$1

throw \$15 billion at fixing schools

Jill Tucker

Feb. 11, 2020 | Updated: Feb. 11, 2020 9:08 a.m.



Jasmine Gonzalez, a kindergarten teacher, listens to Yumine Hermosillo Teodoro (left) and Mina Gomez at San Pablo's Lake Elementary School, which doesn't have dividers in all the rooms.

Photo: Yalonda M. James / The Chronicle

The largest school bond in state history, at \$15 billion, is going to voters in March as supporters try to put a dent in a \$100 billion backlog of failing boiler rooms, leaky roofs and new construction projects needed at K-12 schools and universities.

San Francisco Chronicle

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Supporters, which include the education establishment as well as the construction industry, would allocate \$9 billion to K-12 schools, \$4 billion for California's public universities and \$2 billion for community colleges.

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School District Votes To Rename Richmond School After Michelle Obama

February 12, 2020 at 8:56 pm

Filed Under: Education, former First Lady, Michelle Obama, Michelle Obama Elementary School, Richmond, West Contra Costa Unified School District

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RICHMOND (CBS SF) — The West Contra Costa Unified School District unanimously voted Wednesday night to rename one of its schools after former First Lady Michelle Obama.

Richmond's Wilson Elementary School will soon be called Michelle Obama Elementary School.

The school's traditional location at 42nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue in Richmond is currently being rebuilt into a state-of-the-art, 21st century facility. Students are currently using a temporary campus in El Cerrito for the time being.

The school was formerly named after Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States. Wilson's legacy has come under

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School District Votes To Rename Richmond School After Michelle Obama



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increased scrutiny in recent years over his administration's race relations and segregationist policies.

RELATED: [District Considers Renaming Richmond School After Michelle Obama](#)

Parents and students wanted to rename the school after the former First Lady of the United States and the school board considered the proposal in January. After gathering input from parents, students and community stakeholders during public meetings, the recommendation progressed forward before Wednesday's vote.



Wilson Elementary School, Richmond (WCCUSD)

According to the school district, the name change will make the school the first in Northern California and the second in the state to be named after Michelle Obama.

"Naming this school after Michelle Obama is a sign of the school's rebirth," Board President Stephanie

Hernandez-Jarvis said in a statement.

"We can see the new physical structure being built, but this name change sets high expectations for the students and staff as they enter a new era for this school and this school community. The parents and students advocated to rename their school after Michelle Obama because they believe the values our former First Lady embodies and the educational, child-centered causes she champions, are representative of what we all aspire to nurture in our school communities. She is a role model for our children and we strive to serve our students with the same kind of love, advocacy, and courage that she served our country."

"We wanted to choose someone on a global level," Wilson PTA President Maisha Cole said. "With a new school and new learning environment, we want our children to think beyond Richmond, to think beyond California, and remind them that they can make a difference locally and globally."

The school currently has around 430 students in grades K-6.

The new school building is expected to open in time for the 2020-21 school year under its new name, the school board said.

Comments (2)

RICHMOND, Calif. -- A school in California's Bay Area will now be called Michelle Obama Elementary.

The school board unanimously approved the change last night to rename Wilson Elementary School in Richmond, California, after the former first lady.

The school is under construction. The West Contra Costa County School District told our sister station [KGO-TV](#) this new school will not be traditional. There will be no hallways, classrooms will have large windows, and doors will connect rooms together.

With this new design, parents and staff thought now would be the time to change the name.

"The school is going through a transformation, and the members of the community have asked that we consider a name change to the school to signify a rebirth," said Marcus Walton, communications director of the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

The PTA started advocating to name it after the first lady, calling her a role model for children.

"She advocates for education she advocates for poverty, for nutrition and healthy living," said PTA President Maisha Cole.

The school had previously been named after the country's 28th president Woodrow Wilson.

They believe it is the first school in Northern California named after Michelle Obama and the second in the state.

The new school is set to open in August 2020.

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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

East Bay School District OKs \$8M in Cuts; Possible Teacher Layoffs Loom

The West Contra Costa Unified School District is facing a nearly \$48 million budget shortfall

By **NBC Bay Area staff** • Published February 13, 2020 • Updated on February 13, 2020 at 4:17 pm



1:21

East Bay School District OKs \$8M in Cuts
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The West Contra Costa school community attends a school board meeting Wednesday night. (Feb. 13, 2020)



Trustees with the West Contra Costa Unified School District approved \$8 million in cuts Wednesday night, but it's not yet clear if teachers will be laid off.

It was just the first round of cuts to balance a \$47 million budget deficit over the next two years. It wasn't clear exactly where the initial cuts will be made, but the board talked about cutting back in nonessential areas such as music, travel for administrators, food and campus police at middle schools.

About 250 teachers are waiting to hear if their jobs will be affected, and it appears they won't find out until March 15. That's when by law the district must notify teachers and other workers of layoffs.

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Teachers with less than 2 years on the job are the most vulnerable.

"The cuts will be changing the way we effect the classroom experience without significantly degrading the classroom experience to our students," the district said in a statement.

The district is made up of 32,000 students.

The board also voted to change the name of the current Wilson School to Michelle Obama Elementary, saying the name reflects the school's core values.

This article tagged under:

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY • SCHOOLS • TEACHERS • WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Board Approves Renaming Elementary School After Michelle Obama

Bay City News Service Published 7:11 am PST, Thursday, February 13, 2020

An East Bay elementary school is being renamed to honor one of country's most recent First Ladies, according to the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Wilson Elementary School will be renamed "Michelle Obama Elementary School" once its currently under-construction Richmond campus opens its doors for the 2020-2021 school year. The school is temporarily housed at a location in El Cerrito.

The district's school board unanimously approved the name change to honor Obama at the district's board meeting on Wednesday night.

"Naming this school after Michelle Obama is a sign of the school's rebirth," Board President Stephanie Hernandez-Jarvis said in a statement. "We can see the new physical structure being built, but this name change sets high expectations for the students and staff as they enter a new era for this school and this school community."

The renaming came after a request from the school's PTA president Maisha Cole and a Jan. 23 meeting of an ad hoc committee, which recommended the change.

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It is the first school in Northern California named after the former First Lady and the second school in the state.

Wilson Elementary School was named after Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States.

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California elementary school to be renamed after Michelle Obama

Posted: 12:27 PM, Feb 13, 2020 **Updated:** 12:21 PM, Feb 13, 2020

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RICHMOND, Calif. – An elementary school in Richmond, California, will be renamed after Michelle Obama.

The West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education **voted unanimously** to rename Wilson Elementary School to Michelle Obama Elementary School.

The board's vote makes the school the first in Northern California and the second in the state named after the former first lady.

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our children to think beyond Richmond, to think beyond California, and remind them that they can make a difference locally and globally.”

Board President Stephanie Hernandez-Jarvis says naming the school after Obama is a sign of the school’s rebirth.

“We can see the new physical structure being built, but this name change sets high expectations for the students and staff as they enter a new era for this school and this school community,” said Hernandez-Jarvis. “The parents and students advocated to rename their school after Michelle Obama because they believe the values our former first lady embodies and the educational, child-centered causes she champions, are representative of what we all aspire to nurture in our school communities. She is a role model for our children and we strive to serve our students with the same kind of love, advocacy, and courage that she served our country.”

The school serves about 430 students in kindergarten through 6th grade and is currently housed on a temporary campus in El Cerrito as its traditional location at 42nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue in Richmond is being rebuilt into a state-of-the-art 21st century facility.

The new school building is expected to open in time for the 2020-21 school year under its new name.

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12 FEBRUARY 2020 / SF POLITICS / JOE KUKURA

California's Largest-Ever \$15 Billion School Bond Ballot Measure, Explained

[Prop. 13](#) is a dirty word (OK two words) to many California progressives, but a new bill with the same name could massively reverse the reduction of funding to California schools.

Old-timers will tell you that California public schools were once the envy of the nation, before a [1978 ballot measure called Prop. 13](#) handed property owners a nearly 60 percent cut on their property taxes, but sucker-punched local school systems' funding. There's [a new Prop. 13 in town](#), every California town that is, in the form of a March 3 statewide ballot measure whose full name is the [Public Preschool, K-12, and College Health and Safety Bond Act of 2020](#). It's an outgrowth of a little-noticed state assembly bill called [AB-48](#), which passed last year and Gavin Newsom happily signed, that authorized \$15 billion in state bonds to rebuild crumbling school facilities — but only if voters give it the final OK.

\$15 billion sounds like a lot, and indeed, it is the biggest school bond

construction projects needed at K-12 schools and universities.” So the \$15 billion sounds like the least we could do, and admirably, the bill prioritizes funding for schools with large percentages of low-income students, foster youth, and English-as-a-second-language students. The Chron [points to this example](#) of a Richmond High School ventilation system that “has been inoperable for 25 years.”

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Austerity types complain, though, that the interest on the bonds will ultimately amount to \$11 billion over the next 35 years, which is nearly the value of the bonds themselves. “A lot of this is being driven by Wall Street,” Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association president Jon Coupal to the Chronicle. “They make a ton of money off this. But is it really good for the citizens of California?” He points to the state’s [\\$7 billion surplus](#) and very healthy \$18 billion rainy day fund.

But this is not a so-called rainy day, argues State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond. “One thing that you have to consider when you are using surplus dollars is that from year to year the economy changes,” he [told California Public Radio](#). “We have been putting money away in the rainy day fund because we know that at some point there will be an economic downturn. One of the

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The Chron breaks down the numbers to note that \$9 billion would be earmarked to upgrade K-12 schools, another \$500 million apiece would go to charter schools and vocational tech schools, \$4 billion is set aside for UC and CSU colleges, and \$2 billion for California community colleges.

The measure is at about 53 percent approval, according to the Public Policy Institute of California, with the Bay Area showing the [highest level of support](#).

As an interesting aside, the above-mentioned Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association requested that California retire the number Prop. 13, like it was a sports jersey or something. That did not happen, and education trade publication [EdSource reminds us](#) that in the 10-year cycle of statewide ballot measure naming, implemented in 1998, the name Prop. 13 was used for a \$2 billion water bond (2000) and a constitutional amendment to prohibit the reassessment of seismically retrofitted buildings (2010). Both of those Prop. 13s passed.

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DrG • 2 days ago



I vote *all* bond measures down. If the money is needed, raise various taxes too pay for the school retooling. Property, individual, sales, and corporate taxes can be increased to get the money. Why waste so much money on interest.

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EastOfEden  DrG • a day ago

I strongly agree. This is another slush fund for CA. Money is fungible, If they don't have to pay for basic maintenance, more money for other things that we don't have to know about. Any bond measure that isn't for new construction is just pocket money for these thieves.

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49_Giants • 2 days ago

If Howard Jarvis group opposes something, I support it, and vice versa.

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Helen Steeply • a day ago • edited

In 1970, when CA schools were the "envy of the nation," California's inflation-adjusted per-student education spending was *half* of what it is today.

I simply don't buy the narrative that the schools' biggest problem is lack of funding.

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News > Education

Richmond school may be renamed after Michelle Obama



West Contra Costa school board will consider recommendation Wednesday to rename Wilson Elementary.



This cover image released by Crown Publishing Group shows “Becoming,” by Michelle Obama, which comes out Nov. 13. (Crown Publishing Group via AP)

By **JON KAWAMOTO** | jkawamoto@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group
PUBLISHED: February 10, 2020 at 6:52 p.m. | UPDATED: February 11, 2020 at 3:46 p.m.

RICHMOND — Richmond could become the home of a school named after Michelle Obama, who served as the nation’s First Lady for eight years during

If the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education approves the name change at its meeting Wednesday evening, Wilson Elementary School will become First Lady Michelle Obama.

The school board is considering the new name after receiving a letter from Wilson Elementary School PTA President Maisha Cole requesting the switch in honor of the former first lady, according to a school district press release Monday.

An ad hoc school board committee held two public meetings to gather input from parents, students and community stakeholders before unanimously voting to recommend the name change at its Jan. 23 meeting, the release stated.

If the school board approves the proposal, Wilson Elementary School will be the first school in Northern California and the second in the state named after Michelle Obama, the release stated. The other school — Michelle Obama Elementary — is located in Panorama City in Southern California.

Wilson Elementary School, which serves about 430 students in grades K-6, was named after Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States.

The school is currently located at a temporary campus in El Cerrito while its permanent building at 42nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue in Richmond is being rebuilt into a state-of-the-art facility. The new school building's expected to open in time for the 2020-21 school year.

The school district board's Wednesday meeting begins 6:30 p.m. at DeJean Middle School, 3400 Macdonald Ave., Richmond.

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Jon Kawamoto is a reporter covering the Lamorinda area, Danville and San Ramon. He was the Hills weeklies editor, in charge of the

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Bay Area elementary school may soon be named after Michelle Obama

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by: [Alexa Mae Asperin](#)

Posted: Feb 12, 2020 / 10:56 AM PST / Updated: Feb 12, 2020 / 10:56 AM PST

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RICHMOND (KRON) – An East Bay school may soon be named after former first lady Michelle Obama.

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Viola Davis to play Michelle Obama in Showtime series 'First Ladies'

Officials will consider retaining Woodrow Wilson Elementary after Mrs. Obama, which came after a request by the school's PTA president and a meeting back in January.

If the board approves the change, this would be the first time in Northern California a school has been named after Michelle Obama, and the second school in California with such a name.

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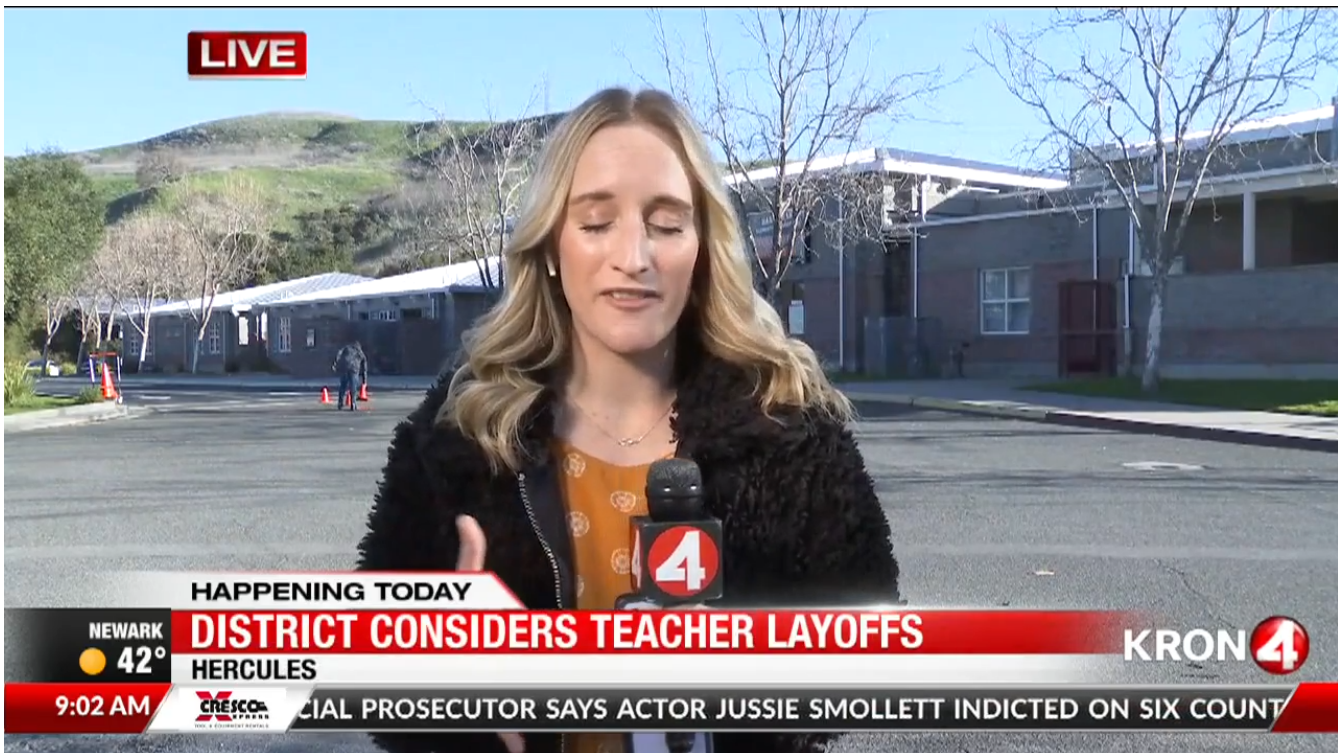


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East Bay school district considers teacher layoffs amid looming budget cuts



by: [Sara Stinson](#)

Posted: Feb 12, 2020 / 09:15 AM PST / Updated: Feb 12, 2020 / 11:26 AM PST

HERCULES (KRON) – \$47.8 million in budget cuts are looking

Hanna Ranc

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But in a special message put out by the district's superintendent and two teachers unions involved, everyone is willing to compromise and work out a solution that would hopefully avoid the layoffs and cuts to the classrooms.

While it's not going to be easy to negotiate with the unions and cut the budget in different ways, the superintendent says they've developed a strategy that will be voted on tonight.

This has a lot of parents worried about how this will affect their child's academics.

Teachers blame the state for lack of funding for education and the district for management of the available funds.

A spokesperson for the district says they are taking responsibility for the budget shortcomings and they are working hard to get out of this financial hole.

The school board meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. at DeJean Middle School in Richmond.

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Michelle Obama Elementary? East Bay school could honor former first lady

Alejandro Serrano

Feb. 13, 2020 | Updated: Feb. 13, 2020 7:09 a.m.



Former First Lady Michelle Obama meets with HTX Books and Brunch, a local book club, on March 2, 2019. West Contra Costa Unified School District board members will vote Wednesday on whether to name an elementary school in El Cerrito after Obama.

Photo: Annie Mulligan /

A Richmond school could honor Michelle Obama on Wednesday night by becoming the first educational institution in Northern California to be named after the former first lady who has championed causes ranging from women's rights and early education to public health.

Board members of the West Contra Costa Unified School District are scheduled to vote Wednesday evening on the proposal to rename Wilson Elementary School, located at 7150 Portola Dr., to Michelle Obama Elementary School. The school is temporarily being housed in El Cerrito while construction

takes place on the Richmond campus.

The vote, which comes about five months after the proposal was first presented, follows two recent public meetings where attendees supported the change, according to a board agenda. School officials said the measure would not have a financial impact.

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Maisha H. Cole, the school's parent-teacher association president, wrote a letter to the five-member board in September requesting the change to honor Obama.

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Cole said she understood the renaming of a school only occurs under certain circumstances, but the school's rebuilding, which is expected to be completed by the fall for the new school year, marked a "monumental feat" for the district and presented an opportunity for the new name.

"We just felt like we are going to have a brand new school, a brand new learning environment, why not a new name?" Cole told The Chronicle before Wednesday night's vote. "We got nothing but good feedback."

In her letter, Cole wrote that PTA members and the school community believe a name change would be

“fundamental to this fresh new start.”

While schools more often are named after presidents to honor their legacies, she said, not every child looks up to or sees themselves in the same leaders.

“Our idea was to create a new legacy,” Cole said. “Woodrow Wilson doesn’t look like most of our children. Michelle Obama does.”

Michelle Obama Elementary in Los Angeles is the only other school in the state to honor the first lady in its name, according to the California Department of Education.

If the West Contra Costa board approves the change, the school would be renamed in August in conjunction with the building’s opening. The school was originally named after President Woodrow Wilson when it was constructed in the 1920s.

“In our minds we were just doing something to benefit our children,” Cole said.

Correction: A previous version of this story misstated the permanent location of the school, which will be housed in Richmond when construction is completed for next school year.

Alejandro Serrano is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer.

Email: alejandr@schronicle.com Twitter: @serrano_alej



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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Teachers, Workers With East Bay School District Facing Layoffs

The West Contra Costa Unified School district is looking at a nearly \$48 million budget shortfall, superintendent says

By **NBC Bay Area staff** • Published February 7, 2020 • Updated on February 11, 2020 at 2:59 pm



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millions of dollars in budget cuts.

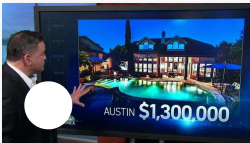
Leaders with Richmond's West Contra Costa Unified School District say they're staring at a nearly \$48 million budget shortfall and are committing to \$32 million in cuts this school year.

2:07

Teachers, Workers With East Bay School District Facing Layoffs

A lot of bad blood in Contra Costa County. A school district is facing a massive budget problem. As many as...
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Both the district and the teachers' union are trying to identify cost-cutting options, but union officials fear if none can be found, about 250 teachers may get pink slips and a total of 400 school workers could be laid off.



there's a plan in place that includes layoffs.

"Our solution for the 2020-21 school year includes **\$6 million in non-salary cuts**, a \$2 million reduction in unrepresented central management personnel costs, a \$2 million decrease in discretionary funds given to schools and negotiating \$22 million in reductions from our four bargaining units," Duffy wrote.

Duffy said the management cuts will be discussed at February school board meetings, but details of the preliminary negotiations with unions cannot be discussed.

Parents are worried on what the possible cuts will do to their child's classroom.

"I'm really concerned about the future of my daughter's education and as a parent it's stressful to think about what these cuts might do," parent Greg Crutsinger said.

The board has a special meeting scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Monday and a regularly scheduled meetings at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12 and Wednesday Feb. 26, according to the district calendar.

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